

Healthy Holiday Eating



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KSC/CAFS Health Education and Wellness Program

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Introduction

For many people, holidays and family gatherings are a time for celebration. These celebrations often involve foods that are high in fat, sugar and calories and short on nutrition. With a few minor changes, however, special occasion foods can be both delicious and nutritious.

Healthy Holiday Strategies

Don't try to diet during the holidays. Set a goal of trying to maintain your present weight. That way, you have a realistic goal. You allow yourself to indulge here and there, but you don't go over the edge.

Make the effort to continue a regular exercise program. Exercise will help keep extra calories away, but it also can reduce the stress of social events and family get-togethers.

Plan holiday gatherings around non-food events, such as singing carols, crafts, making wreaths, and ice-skating. Cut back on your family's television viewing time. Limit the number of hours your children spend playing video games. Instead make a new holiday tradition. Take a brisk walk (or wheel) around the neighborhood to see the holiday decorations or grab your bike, walking shoes or snow shoes and head out to the nearest trails or national park.



Tips for Healthy Holiday Eating

1. Eat a healthy breakfast everyday. Choose whole grains, fruits, and nuts.
2. Don't skip meals. You will be less likely to snack on fatty, high calorie foods or binge when you finally do eat.
3. Pace, don't race. Pay attention to how quickly you eat and exactly what you eat and drink. Savor the flavor by eating slowly and choosing your food carefully.
4. Keep an eye on your portion sizes. In the heat of celebration, portion sizes can be excessive. Instead of eating a large amount of food, try to eat a large variety of foods.
5. Don't let a hectic holiday schedule force you to eat fast food. Prepare and freeze several quick, healthy meals. That way, you have an option other than high-fat, fast-food meals.

6. Don't go to a party or event on an empty stomach. Before going out, snack on protein, like chicken or cottage cheese. Protein satisfies and helps you eat less. Some people have the idea that if they skip lunch, or don't eat all day, they can eat more later. But skipping meals means you're hungry, and your chances of overeating later are much higher.

7. Offer to bring a favorite low-calorie dish to holiday parties, so you know there will be at least one "safe" item available. Stand far away from buffets so you're not tempted to nibble constantly.

8. When the party is at your house, put low-calorie and fat-free salad dressings on the menu. Pack the table with flavorful vegetable dishes, and make reduced-fat versions of your family's favorite traditional dishes.

9. Do not eat directly from the hors d'oeuvres tray. You will lose count of how many you have eaten. Choose a few and put them on a plate.

10. If you know you are going to overeat on a certain day or days, plan ahead. Cut calories the rest of the week, as little as 200 calories less a day can make a difference.

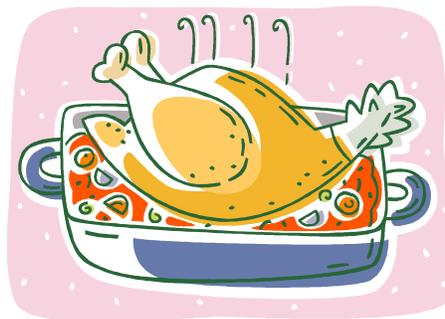
11. Make decisions about what you're going to eat. Weight management is all about moderation and making healthy decisions.

12. Before dinner, drink a large glass of water, have a few nuts, or start dinner with a salad or soup.

13. Sip on low calorie beverages instead of high calorie punch, alcoholic drinks, or eggnog.

14. Remember that alcohol is packed with calories. Choose light beer and wine over mixed drinks. A holiday-sized mixed drink can have as many as 500 calories or more.

15. Eating favorite and traditional holiday foods is fun and brings back memories of past happy celebrations with family and friends. You can enjoy your favorite foods. Moderation is the key.



Tips for Preparing Healthier Meals

1. For a holiday turkey, choose a bird that is not self basted and lower the sodium content and the price. To ensure a moist bird, remove it from the oven when the internal temperature of the breast reaches 170 degrees.
2. Use skim milk instead of whole milk
3. Use olive oil or vegetable oil non-fat spray on vegetables instead of the free pour method which often ends up to be too much
4. Omit butter or margarine from stuffing recipes
5. Flavor mashed potatoes with skim milk, garlic and a small amount of parmesan cheese instead of butter or margarine and whole milk
6. Use ¼ cup of egg white or egg substitute in place one whole egg in recipes
7. For pie crusts, try pre-made graham cracker and ready made pie crusts (they are lower in calories than standard crusts) also try crushed gingersnap cookies (even lower)
8. For making gravy, remove fat from juices using a fat-skimmer cup or a shallow container placed in the freezer - the fat rises to the top (you can save up to 56 grams of fat)
9. Use non-nutritive sweeteners in place of sugar in pie fillings, puddings and cranberry sauce (you can save about 653 calories per cup)
10. Substitute apple or orange juice and cinnamon and omit butter or margarine and marshmallows in candied yams.
11. Green bean casserole can be made with small chunks of potatoes and fat free half - n- half and topped with almonds instead of cream soup.

Healthy Recipes Websites

Healthy Holidays. <http://www.fitnessandfreebies.com/holidays/index.html>

All Recipes. <http://holiday.allrecipes.com/default.asp>

Meals Matter. <http://www.mealsmatter.org/EatingForHealth/index.aspx>

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